Safe and Sound: A proposed longitudinal study of the effects of a Sigma Theta Tau International membership-based mentoring program on job satisfaction and intention-to-stay in new BSN-prepared nurses

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Introduction

At an estimated cost of about $85,000 to train a new nurse, turnover within the first year of nursing practice remains a significant issue (Jones, 2008). Up to half of all newly-graduated Registered Nurses have considered leaving nursing in their first year (Coxon & Hengstenberg-Sims, 2006). Actual turnover depends on the interaction of individual new nurse characteristics, their work environment, and organizational factors (Beecroft, Dorey & Wenten, 2007).

Aspects which contribute to job satisfaction, and correlate to intention-to-stay at one's place of employment, are numerous and complex. Socialization of new nurses, adequacy of orientation periods, stress and fatigue are some of these aspects. It is postulated that a frequent support of a seasoned nurse – albeit external to the workplace – may temper the challenging aspects of transition to practice.

While most residency programs offer training and socialization within the workplace, a sense of parallel evaluation exists between the mentor and protégé (Meinsen, 2003). It is proposed that a mentoring program of longer duration, and in association with the local STTI chapter activities and opportunities to network, may be beneficial to new graduate nurses’ job satisfaction and intention to stay in their current employ.

Study Purpose

Mentoring programs extending past two years are uncommon, and yet the stresses of nursing still result in significant turnover during this period of time. The impact of membership in the nursing society Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI) has not been studied regarding new graduate nurses’ transition to practice.

This study proposes analysis of the impact of a two-year mentorship, with the additional supports available through STTI membership, and the opportunity of quarterly socialization with participant peers.

Methods

Proposed is a nonprobability sample, mixed-method, longitudinal pilot research study, which aims to evaluate protégé job satisfaction and intention-to-stay at their current employment through the first two years of professional nursing practice.

These protégés will be offered a voluntary commitment to a dyad, with a mentor who has at least two years of experience. All 12 dyads will be subject to a training and introduction day regarding expectations of the Safe and Sound Mentoring Program, and will be required to attend a minimum of 6 of the 8 quarterly education, socialization, and interview days over the course of the mentorship program.

The program uses the Academic Medical-Surgical Nurses’ (AMSN) Mentoring Program format, which helps to establish mentorship goals for the dyad, assists in monitoring progress, and gauges job satisfaction of the new graduate. The Design and Sound program will also use Duchshcer’s Transition Shock Framework to add perspective to the reality new graduates are experiencing:

1. Physical: A reality shock awaits many new RNs as they end their work orientation and begin working largely independently; they may doubt their actual knowledge and skill compared to their seasoned colleagues, and may grapple with a new reality of their chosen profession (Isupovkala-Bourret, & Salentnera, 2013; Duchshe, 2009; Flitkam & Ware, 2008; Cunin, 2001). The intention-to-stay despite obstacles and the resultant turnover of nurses is partly a factor of personal resiliency.

2. Team Competencies: Whether nurses are able to build self-protective mechanisms through establishing professional relationships, achieving a healthy balance life, becoming insightful with their emotions in relation to work, and being able to reflect on difficult circumstances, becomes their strength or ability to rebound when dealing with stress and workplace adversity (Garcia-Os, DiPasquale, Garcia-Ona, Jakubowski, & O’Flaherty, 2013; Jackson, Firkko, & Ennagh, 2007).

3. Organizational: The essence of the TeamSTEPPS initiative is that each healthcare provider functions efficiently, using their knowledge, attitude, and performance optimally in the workplace. The mentor and protégé will, after this training, be prepared to discuss a new way of perception of demonstrated leadership, awareness, and performance optimally in the workplace, and their how or his ability to assist others, and his or her fluency in communication skills.

4. Dyad Communication Plan: It is strongly recommended that the dyad communicate in some face-to-face, by telephone, by video chat, or in person. Monthly, in order that the relationship have adequate opportunity to develop and progress without process loss. This frequency ensures an adequate dose of intervention, and helps the protégé feel as though he or she is a priority (Eller, 2014).

5. Topical for discussion in conflict resolution communication include efficient listening, keeping the mutual end goal in mind, and dissipating negative emotion during dialogue.

Participants

The two study populations will consist of newly-licensed Registered Nurse-New Graduates (NLRNs) (In Australia, Bachelor’s of Nursing) must have successfully completed the (U.S.) National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) within the past six months, and within the past three months have been induced into the STTI nursing society, by virtue of their higher academic grade point average in their Bachelor’s of Nursing program. They must also have a hiring date within one month of the study start date. This is recommended so that the new graduate is receiving the support of workplace orientation, and so that quarterly education workshop topics are readily applied to workplace issues.

The mentors will be active STTI members and operationalized as seasoned nurses with at least eight years’ experience. This group is also required to have a minimum educational preparation of a BSN, and practice as a nurse leader in healthcare or academia.

As members of STTI nursing society, the local chapters will offer socialization and educational opportunities to augment the mentorship. This socialization, occurring on a quarterly basis, will serve as a covariate of the independent variable.

Intervention

Quarterly Education Days:

Workshop and education topics are continually identified by recent literature, and meeting managers and directors in appropriate order of importance include: teamwork and communication; decision-making; problem-solving; conflict resolution; self-care; working with managers; and professional development. These education days are tailored to the STTI chapter’s members: this may facilitate networking and socialization of new nurses with their chapter colleagues.

The foundations of TeamSTEPPS and communication in context are reinforced in this option (the copyright 2-day Crucial Conversations course) are the first two education topics that are offered to the dyads at the 4-hour-long Saturday Quarterly Education workshops.

Data Collection

Protégés and the control group will participate in group interviews on the quarterly education days separately. Semi-structured interviews, incorporating components of Duchshe’s Transition Shock Framework, will be conducted, transcribed, and coded for themes. All participants will also respond to quantitative surveys distributed electronically every quarter. Survey instruments include items from the AMSN Mentoring Program and:

- Laschinger’s Conditions of Work Effectiveness Questionnaire – II (CWEQ-II). The CWEQ-II includes measurement perceptions of access to opportunity, resources, information, support, and enhancement of this access through formal and informal power.
- Meyer and Allen’s Three Component Model of Organizational Commitment (TOC). The TOC includes measurement of three forms of employee commitment to an organization: desire-based, obligation-based, and cost-based, as an indicator of turnover intention and performance.
- Cowin’s Nurse Self-Concept Questionnaire (NSCQ). This general scale provides measures of graduate nurse retention. Cowin’s Nurse Retention Index (NRI). The NRI measures a nurse’s intention of staying in their current employ.
- TeamSTEPPS’ Teamwork Perception Questionnaire (T-TPQ). The T-TPQ is a survey to measure hierarchical teamwork relationships, as well as teamwork skills and behaviors.

Data Analysis

Data analysis will use multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) testing, and will use the means of the multiple dyads to test for the difference in the two dependent variables, job satisfaction and intention-to-stay.

Qualitative data: Coding for recurrent themes will inform regarding job satisfaction and intention to stay or depart from a job, and the events and thought processes which occur throughout the course of the protégé’s first two years of practice.

Data Dissemination

The study results, discussion, conclusion and recommendations will be written and distributed to relevant stakeholders such as local universities, high schools, and hospitals in the catchment area. Recommendations for any changes in practice will be new nurse transition to practice will also be shared via a written paper, journals, and presentations at local education events.

References & Acknowledgement

AMSN - Academy of Medical Surgical Nursing Mentoring Program (2012) - www.amsnz.org
- Duchshe, J. E. B. (2012). From surviving to thriving: Newfoundland and Labrador’s first year of professional nursing practice (2nd ed.). St. John’s, NL: Nursing the Future. Special thanks to Dr. Laschinger and management with the Safe and Sound project.

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